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## June 2010 - LGBT Pride Floor Ceremony Participants

### Guest Performance:

#### **Garrin Benfield**

Garrin Benfield is an openly gay musician living in San Francisco. He has gained attention and developed a strong following because of his unique sound which has been described as Freestyle Acoustic Rock. His music is a blend of moody guitar driven rock and polyrhythmic groove all run through the filter of a very serious Singer/Songwriter. Garrin is first and foremost a guitar player though. His talent shines through as a solo artist when he flat-picks his way through complicated and lightning-fast arrangements and also while he uses a Loop Station to create mesmerizing soundscapes upon which he lays blistering rock, blues and jazz licks, darkened by his extensive use of effect pedals. As a bandleader, Garrin can command the attention of seasoned players and improvise with the dexterity and ingenuity of players many years his senior. Improvisation is at the center of a Garrin Benfield concert experience. Whether at a solo show or at a full band event, Garrin twists and turns the tunes each night in an ever-evolving attempt to keep searching for new musical challenges.

### Honorees:

#### **Aaron Alvarado**

Aaron Alvarado is being honored for his courage, perseverance, and work as a catalyst for change in his community. He is a recent alumnus of Dinuba High School where he served as a class officer and the student representative to the school board. While at Dinuba High School, he and a friend founded the school's first Gay-Straight Alliance to provide a voice for the LGBT and questioning students and their allies. He has served for the past two years on the Statewide Advisory Council of the Gay-Straight Alliance Network. In his hometown, he recently convinced the local school board to remove all of the homophobic curriculum from health courses to improve the well-being of future students. He will be attending UC Davis in the fall.

#### **Dr. William Beck**

Dr. William Beck is being honored for his lifelong commitment to the LGBT community. He has spent nearly three decades building an LGBT community infrastructure that has raised millions of dollars for people living with HIV/AIDS and other social services. For 29 years, he has served on the board of the AIDS Assistance Fund. He is a founder of the San Diego Human Dignity Foundation (SDHDF), an organization that supports planned giving, as well as empowers LGBT donors through a perpetual endowment to fund LGBT community unmet needs. By December of 2010, along with their funding partners, SDHDF will have granted \$2 million in gifts to worthy nonprofit organizations. Dr. Beck has served on the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Board, the American Civil Liberties Union board of directors, the Greater San Diego Business Association Board and others. Before moving to San Diego in 1981, Bill was an assistant professor at the University of Arizona and at the Southern Methodist University in

Dallas. He has published numerous scholarly articles and co-authored a book in the field of school desegregation. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1975. Bill and his life partner of almost 34 years, David Huskey, were married in 2008.

### **Cecilia Chung**

Cecilia Chung is being honored for her advocacy for the transgender community as well as her efforts to promote services for people living with HIV/AIDS. She is the former Deputy Director of the Transgender Law Center, is an immigrant from Hong Kong, and a San Francisco resident since 1985.

Cecilia has served on several boards and commissions in the Bay Area to promote inclusion, including the San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration Executive Board where she was the first Asian and first transgender woman elected President of the Board.

### **Professor David Cruz**

Professor David Cruz is being honored for his work advocating for the LGBT community through the judicial system. He is a constitutional law expert focusing on civil rights and equality issues, including equal marriage rights for same-sex couples. He specializes in discrimination law and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

Before joining the USC Law School faculty in 1996, Professor Cruz was a Bristow Fellow in the Office of the Solicitor General in Washington, D.C. He also clerked for the Honorable Edward R. Becker, Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He is past chair of the American Association of Law Schools' Section on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues and president of the International Lesbian and Gay Law Association.

### **Del Martin (Posthumous) and Phyllis Lyon**

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon are being honored for their lifetime of work for LGBT equality. The two met in 1950 and were partners from 1952 until Del Martin's death in 2008. They founded the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco in 1955, which became the first social and political organization for lesbians in the United States. They were the first lesbian couple to join the National Organization for Women. Both women worked to form the Council on Religion and the Homosexual to persuade ministers to accept gay people into their churches and used their influence to decriminalize homosexuality in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both served in the White House Conference on Aging in 1995. They were the first same-sex couple married in San Francisco on February 12, 2004—which was later declared invalid. They were, again, the first same-sex couple married in San Francisco when they were legally married on June 16, 2008.

### **Armistead Maupin**

Armistead Maupin is being honored for his most famous work, "Tales of the City." The first portion of this series of novels was initially published as a newspaper serial and later reworked into a series of books, three television miniseries, and now a stage musical of the same name. These novels were revolutionary in that they were some of the first mainstream fiction in American society to portray the lives of LGBT people as main characters in a positive light. Countless people have read, loved, and been influenced by these novels.

### **Tina Reynolds**

Tina Reynolds is being honored for her extraordinary inability to stand by and watch even one person be treated as less than equal. She has been a tireless activist for social equality and change during a time when these words were still largely foreign in mainstream America.

Tina and her design firm Uptown Studios, has donated thousands of hours to the fight for recognition and rights for people living with HIV and AIDS, Equal Rights for the LGBT Community, Marriage Equality and

civil and equal rights for our homeless neighbors. Immediately after the passage of Proposition 8, during a time of unprecedented fear and despair for LGBT people, Tina founded Equality Action NOW, a grassroots activist organization drawn from the queer community and straight allies of all ages and walks of life, to bring people together in peaceful protest of inequality.

### **Jewel Thais-Williams**

Jewel Thais-Williams is being honored for her decades-long advocacy for healthcare within the LGBT community. The founder of the club Jewel's Catch One in Los Angeles, which began as a black gay and lesbian disco, Jewel saw the toll HIV was taking on gay patrons in the 1980s and partnered with other activists to launch the Minority AIDS Project in 1985. By 1989, she opened the first residential home for women and children living with AIDS in the country. Jewel's Catch One now raises money for the Village Health Foundation, a non-profit clinic that provides free and low-cost therapy, acupuncture and other holistic health treatments. Thais-Williams, who founded the Village Health Foundation, now serves as its executive director.

### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of LGBT Pride Celebrations in California – Represented by Christopher Street West (Los Angeles' pride organization) and San Francisco Pride**

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 marked a major turning point in the history of the LGBT movement. The riots were precipitated by what was then a routine police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, on June 28, 1969. The riots only lasted a few nights and did not produce nearly the property damage or casualties that other riots in the 1960s had produced. Nonetheless, the riots represent the first time lesbians and gays brought widespread attention to government policies that persecuted homosexuals.

Beginning in 1970 and each year since, the LGBT community has held celebrations to remember the Stonewall Riots. Although California now hosts dozens of LGBT Pride celebrations each year, the oldest two celebrations on the West Coast were founded on June 28, 1970—exactly one year after the riots—in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Year after year, the LGBT community organizes these events with a common purpose: to educate the world, commemorate their heritage, celebrate their culture, and liberate their people.